United Nations A/56/PV.9

General Assembly

Fifty-sixth session

Official Records

9th plenary meeting
Tuesday, 25 September 2001, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Han Seung-soo ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 10 (*continued*)

Report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization (A/56/1 and Corr.1 and Add.1)

Mr. Pradham (Bhutan): My delegation congratulates the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, on his report (A/56/1) to this session of the General Assembly on the work of the Organization. We found the report to be comprehensive in covering the activities of the Organization during the course of the last year. The report brings to the fore and emphasizes the principles of the Charter and the international laws, treaties and conventions that guide, or at least should guide, the work of the Organization and, more particularly, its Member States. It is a frank report that brings forth the issues on which the international community has yet to take adequate action or make sufficient progress.

Above all, the report clearly bears the stamp of an active, principled, concerned, knowledgeable and capable Secretary-General.

The Government and the people of Bhutan came forward and, without reservation, endorsed the re-election of Mr. Kofi Annan for a second term of office. It was therefore a joyful occasion for us when Member States confirmed his appointment for a second term on 29 June this year. As we once again extend our warm congratulations to him, we wish him all success in the arduous tasks that lie ahead for the United Nations.

In that context, especially in view of the recent events here in New York City, the home of the United Nations, and in Washington, D.C., the capital of our host country, the foremost issue on all our minds at this point in time is terrorism. As you informed us, Mr. President, we will be discussing this matter under agenda item 166 on 1 October.

We are obviously concerned with terrorist acts and their implications for human security, especially in view of the dimensions that terrorism has come to acquire as a violent weapon to achieve objectives, as a heinous tool that knows no limits and as a crime against humanity that does not differentiate between military and civilian targets and personnel, men and women, children and adults. The dimensions and scope of terrorism are growing by the day with serious implications for international peace and security.

In the Secretary-General's report, in paragraph 224, under the heading "Legal affairs", he has informed us that the International Convention for the Suppression of Terrorist Bombings entered into force on 23 May 2001. This is a welcome development. We are also aware that the United Nations efforts thus far have been to create a legal framework and that work on a comprehensive convention on international terrorism has already commenced. This is something that we will now have to expedite.

The need is obviously felt for the United Nations to get more involved in mustering international cooperation and to take appropriate steps to prevent the rising tide of terrorism. In view of this, my delegation

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

01-54908 (E)

suggests that the Secretary-General's report, in the future, contain in greater detail, and perhaps under a separate section, information for the General Assembly on the efforts of the Organization to curb terrorism.

The Secretary-General's report demonstrates the vast responsibilities that the United Nations has had to take upon itself in the interests and for the benefit of humankind and the planet. While there is a tremendous amount of diversity that makes up our universal membership, what is most essential to guide all our activities are the principles of the Charter, even as we adapt to an ever-changing international environment. The Secretary-General has called upon Member States to match their rhetoric with action. We support his efforts to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. We endorse the idea that preventing the recurrence of conflict should be the central priority of the United Nations, and that this would be the most desirable and cost-effective strategy to ensure lasting peace.

But these laudable goals cannot move forward without the political and principled support of Member States. Our efforts must therefore continue to be aimed towards eliminating weapons of mass destruction, the trafficking in small arms, the banning of landmines, providing more effective and greater humanitarian assistance, ensuring that children are not made into soldiers and do not suffer in armed conflicts and eliminating the gross mistreatment of women in some parts of the world. And then there is the clear need for the United Nations to enhance its peacekeeping role and capacity.

While progress in some of these areas is clearly visible, especially the diminishing production and use of landmines, we cannot let up in our efforts, as much still remains to be done. The United Nations role has to be consistent and unfailing in maintaining peace and enhancing the security of all parts of the world without exception. To us here at the United Nations, the Secretary-General's annual report is an important tool for keeping track of the work of the Organization.

The Secretary-General's report also serves as important advice and guidance to Member States and in effect outlines what is expected of them as responsible members of the world community. In this regard, the Secretary-General has reiterated,

> "development cooperation is a solid foundation on which to build stability, economic justice and social development". (*A/56/1, para.8*)

This statement is a significant guideline and is crucial for the tasks that lie ahead of us. The poverty in the developing world is becoming unbearably severe, especially with the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. The statistics on poverty and its prevalence are well known to the international community. Hence, there is no need for me to reiterate them under this agenda item. Civil and international conflicts have destabilized societies and have increased human suffering. Social and economic development and the battle against HIV/AIDS need the commitment, strong political will and conviction of Member States in order to make progress on these vital issues. In fact, the recently concluded high-level dialogue on strengthening economic cooperation dealt with the question of making globalization inclusive and beneficial to developing countries, and especially the least developed among them.

In conclusion, I would like to state that my delegation is happy with the report of the Secretary-General. We are confident in his leadership and will extend our support and cooperation in all his endeavours.

Mr. Ryan (Ireland): As I take the floor for the first time during the fifty-sixth session, I extend to you, Sir, my congratulations on your election as President of the General Assembly. My delegation looks forward to working with you to address the many important tasks ahead of us and is confident that we shall achieve them under your guidance and leadership.

Before I proceed to address the agenda item before us, I wish to reiterate, in the General Assembly framework, to the delegation of the United States the heartfelt condolences of the Irish delegation and of the Government and the people of Ireland for the horrendous attacks inflicted on our host country and city. This Assembly will have an opportunity, shortly, to address the very real threat and scourge of terrorism under a separate agenda item, but none of us here can stand at this podium and not denounce these attacks — attacks not only on the United States, but on all the world's right-thinking people. As European heads of Government meeting in an extraordinary European Council stated last Friday, the attacks of 11 September

were a challenge to the conscience of each human being. We condemn them utterly.

I would like to commend the Secretary-General for his wide-ranging report on the work of the Organization contained in document A/56/1. In his introduction, he notes that the United Nations activities in the past year have been conducted against a background of suffering caused by violent conflicts across the world. One year on from the Millennium Summit, this Assembly must address these conflicts with a new resolve, born of the realization that we cannot separate international peace and security from issues of poverty and underdevelopment. These, in turn, often produce economic and social tensions which, left to smoulder, can ignite larger and potentially destabilizing conflagrations.

The events of 11 September have demonstrated all the more that the entire international community must seek with renewed vigour to resolve various long-standing disputes around the world, disputes on which terrorism feeds. As we confront those who exploit these disputes for their own twisted purposes, we must take urgent action to resolve the root causes and work together to achieve a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. Work to implement the Millennium Summit development goals must remain a key priority for the international community.

I welcome, therefore, the attention which the Secretary-General has paid in his report this year to issues of conflict prevention, peace-building and peacekeeping and the protection of civilians. He notes the increased attention devoted by the Security Council to the prevention of armed conflict and its growing interest in the protection of civilians. As the Secretary-General rightly points out, it is, unfortunately, a feature of modern conflicts that the main brunt falls on innocent civilians rather than on conventional armies. As a member of the Security Council, Ireland has a policy to continue to engage vigorously on these very important issues.

We welcome and strongly support continued efforts to improve early-warning systems through inter-disciplinary fact-finding and confidence-building missions to volatile areas, through regional prevention strategies and through reports to the Security Council on disputes that have the potential for destabilization.

We look forward to the finalization of the practical guide for the United Nations system on support by Headquarters to field staff in the formulation and implementation of coherent peace-building strategies. This sort of backstopping from the centre is essential if the United Nations on the ground is to do its job effectively and be able to learn from previous experiences.

We also welcome the attention being paid to improving coordination between humanitarian action and peace operations, and efforts to adopt a more holistic approach generally. Many conflict situations are extremely complex and require integrated responses. We are grateful that more attention is now being given to remedying gaps identified in the provision of humanitarian assistance to internally displaced populations, which are often less visible within their own borders.

The review conducted by the Secretary-General of the state of the world's affairs presents a very mixed picture, and the overall balance sheet is still disturbing. We share his disappointment at setbacks in a number of areas of conflict. Progress is being registered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Burundi and concerned countries in the region. However, fragility and uncertainty persists in these areas, and there are continuing difficulties in the implementation of established agreements and frameworks.

The Middle East has proved even more intractable over the past year, although we believe there is now a wider recognition all round of the essential ingredients that must underpin the peace process than there was earlier this year. We must all build on that. Ireland, through its membership in the Security Council, will continue to search for lasting solutions to these and other disputes.

There are also, however, some tangible signs of progress. One example is East Timor, where the United Nations is playing a vital role in its evolution from a post-conflict situation towards independence. We agree with the Secretary-General that the extensive efforts of the international community should not be undermined by an early downsizing of support. A substantial international presence, including civilian, military and police components, will be necessary after independence. We further agree that such a presence should be mandated by the Security Council and funded from assessed contributions. For its part, Ireland is already committed to continuing its support.

We believe, despite recent acts of violence by UNITA directed against the civilian population, that the overall situation in Angola is moving in the right direction. Last week in the Security Council, we heard the Angolan Government's clear recognition of the successes of the United Nations sanctions regime, together with the Government's commitment to open elections and urgent work in the humanitarian, health, education and human rights areas in cooperation with the international community.

The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) has been doing good work leading up to Kosovo-wide elections in November. We agree fully with the Secretary-General that Kosovo Serbs must be encouraged to participate fully in the election process and supported in that respect. The task of UNMIK extends beyond the elections and the Secretary-General points to the many crucial challenges which it still must meet in trying to build a new and equitable society.

We continue to follow closely the implementation within the Secretariat of the recommendations of the Brahimi report on peacekeeping, and we appreciate the responses given by the Secretary-General to requests from Member States for greater detail in some areas. I would like to assure him of our continued support for measures aimed at building the United Nations peacekeeping capacity. The Secretary-General rightly makes the point that there is a need for further assistance in building up the capacity of Africa to undertake peacekeeping operations. We look forward to further action on this during the coming year.

The Secretary-General points to the need to deepen cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations in strengthening United Nations peace-building activities in the wider effort to prevent conflict. This worked well in Haiti, where there was good cooperation between the Organization of American States and the United Nations, and we fully support the further enhancement of such mutually reinforcing links. As a member of the European Union, Ireland also welcomes the steps to strengthen cooperation between the Union and the United Nations in the area of crisis management.

International peace and security are indivisible and, because of this, we share the unease with which the Secretary-General regards the current uncertainties in the area of disarmament, particularly the weakening of the commitment to existing bilateral and multilateral arms-control agreements. Surely recent events strengthen, rather than diminish, the need for renewed commitment to multilateral negotiations towards legally binding, irreversible and verifiable disarmament agreements across the range of immensely destructive weapons in existence today.

In the area of conventional weapons, there is no question that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a significant contributing factor in many modern conflicts. If our response is to have any chance of success, the problem has to be addressed in a comprehensive and integrated way. The July 2001 Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was both the culmination of a long preparatory process and the launching pad for what we hope will be a dynamic follow-up process. The Conference was a significant, but first, step. Ireland will assume its responsibilities in working actively and cooperatively with other Member States to implement the Programme of Action. We support early, integrated action to this end.

In the Millennium Declaration, we pledged collectively to make the right to development a reality for everyone and to meet the special needs of Africa. The Secretary-General rightly focuses an important chapter of his report on cooperating for development. He points to some highly important developments over the past year, in particular the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which took place in May, and the special session on HIV/AIDS, which took place in June, as well as preparations for the crucial International Conference on Financing for Development, scheduled to take place early next year. If we are to remain faithful to and fulfil the promise of the Millennium Declaration, it will be essential to work together and to put words into action.

The Secretary-General has now issued his road map for implementation of the Declaration. It is a quality document, and we commend the Secretary-General for it. The road map provides the international community with a comprehensive and coherent approach to the achievement of the millennium development goals. We must work together to ensure that progress towards these goals is accelerated.

The United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) *Human Development Report* for 2001 makes

clear that only a limited number of countries are on track to meet, by 2015, the goal of reducing by half the number of people living in extreme poverty. The achievement of this goal is fundamental to our efforts to ensure that globalization works for the benefit of all peoples in all countries. The road map will serve as an important benchmark against which to measure progress.

Ireland welcomes the establishment of the Information and Communication Technologies Task Force. The Task Force will play an important role in elaborating policies, providing advice on strategies and best practice, and mobilizing international efforts to bridge the digital divide.

We welcome the attention which has been given over the past year to strengthening the management of the United Nations and to accountability and oversight, as well as to more rigorous follow-up in ensuring that recommendations to address deficiencies are implemented.

Finally, in welcoming the Secretary-General's annual report on the work of the Organization, I would like to point to ways in which it could be still further improved. I would encourage implementation of two specific points identified in General Assembly resolution 51/241. These were, first, the inclusion of a forward-looking section containing specific goals for the Organization; and, secondly, the addition of an annex giving information on costs of programmes and activities. Both of these would be useful tools for the Secretariat in ongoing efforts to improve accountability and oversight, and they would also help Member States assess the extent to which mandates have been fulfilled.

Mr. Seixas da Costa (Portugal): Belgium will be taking the floor later today on behalf of the European Union. Portugal, of course, fully subscribes to that statement.

As this is Portugal's first formal intervention in this plenary meeting, let me start by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of this very demanding session of the General Assembly. My delegation and I will strive to be as helpful as possible in supporting your efforts to make this session a success.

This session is taking place at a unique and difficult time for the international community and during a period of grief for us all, for the host country of the United Nations and for all of the countries that lost citizens in this tragedy, including my own.

Portugal thanks the Secretary-General for his report on the work of the Organization and commends him and all his staff in the Secretariat and in other parts of the United Nations for the efforts undertaken this year in implementing the agenda of the Organization. My delegation is especially pleased that Mr. Kofi Annan will continue serving as Secretary-General for a second term, giving us the benefit of his leadership and experience in these particularly trying times.

The terrorist attacks of 11 September present a grave challenge to the United Nations — a challenge which can best be faced by enhancing even further international cooperation in all fields and at all levels. Let us not forget that it is the United Nations that represents the highest and most universal expression of this international cooperation, and that it is, therefore, the United Nations that must remain at the core of all international efforts.

Security, in all its aspects, is clearly our main concern. How can our people feel safe in their homes? But how can we ensure also that they have homes to feel safe in? How can we help to bring conflicts to an end, and how can we prevent them from beginning? How can countries help themselves develop, and how can others help them do so? How can we secure the rule of law and protect human rights? Above all, how can we help those most in need?

The issues touched upon by the Secretary-General in his report — peace and security, humanitarian assistance, development, human rights and international law — all of these matters, in and of themselves and where they intersect, come together as a whole to provide the greatest challenges to the United Nations as well as the very purpose of its existence.

This is made abundantly clear in the preamble to the Charter of this Organization. Those powerful words ring as true today as they did when they were first declared more than half a century ago, and they set out clearly what is necessary for us, the United Nations, to continue to strive for.

First, we are striving for peace and security. Through the reform of the United Nations peacekeeping support structures and his report on conflict prevention, the Secretary-General is addressing

fundamental needs in order to ensure that the United Nations has the capacity to meet the challenges posed by armed conflict. Work must proceed towards meeting organizational and resource requirements, to permit the effective planning, deployment and management of concurrent United Nations peacekeeping operations in different parts of the world. Particularly important is meeting the timelines established for rapid deployment. The recommendations of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations will be crucial to these efforts, and Portugal urges the approval of the necessary resources by the relevant bodies.

The recommendations contained in the report on conflict prevention are being taken up by all of the organs and agencies involved, and we look forward to their comprehensive and coordinated consideration in order to translate them into concrete measures.

The Secretariat's peace-building plan of action will also be of great importance as we increasingly recognize the need for coherent strategies for peace which run the gamut of activities from prevention to peacekeeping to peacebuilding and back to prevention once again. The Secretary-General is right when he writes of the need for a more effective capacity for situation analysis. This will lead to a more responsive and more effective United Nations.

The problem posed by the dangerous proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, such as biological and chemical weapons, cries out for continued international efforts at cooperation in the area of disarmament. It is imperative that these efforts proceed.

The struggle against the destabilizing accumulation and spread of small arms and light weapons also represents an example of the kind of coordinated international action that is needed to address the challenges that face us all.

Secondly, we are striving to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need. Natural disasters and conflicts and their toll on our peoples around the world are uppermost in our mind; before anything else, we must try to save lives in immediate danger. United Nations humanitarian action must continue to receive the greatest attention from our Governments to ensure that the capacity is there to address the increasingly complex situations that pose such a challenge to us today.

Coordination, both at Headquarters and in the field, is critical to strengthen this capacity, thereby ensuring that all humanitarian actors are able to use their strengths and particular expertise, avoid any duplication of efforts and be most effective in the provision of assistance.

The plight of displaced persons — both within and across borders — continues, deservedly, to receive the attention of the United Nations. Portugal welcomes the Secretary-General's decision to strengthen the United Nations capacity to deal with internally displaced people, giving due importance to their need for protection and for improvements in their situation.

Access to the populations in need is, of course, crucial to the provision of humanitarian assistance. This cannot be stressed enough. Access should be unhindered and in conditions of safety and security, both for the humanitarian workers and for the victims.

Thirdly, the United Nations is striving for development. Poverty is a dire threat to human security, and the war declared on poverty by the Millennium Summit must continue. Poverty, social exclusion and inequality lead to tensions and conflicts and provide fertile ground for extremism, fanaticism and other violent forms of political expression.

In the globalization of the world's economies, we must be acutely aware of potential negative effects, and globalization must be given a human face so that its benefits are distributed as widely as possible. Globalization must be a collective process of growth and progress, seeking to include and not to exclude, to construct and not to destroy, to develop and not to impoverish. A regulated process of globalization, based on free and fair trade, can have a decisive influence in spreading the benefits of growth and contributing to the alleviation of social imbalances and ethnic tensions, as well as the cyclical crises that affect societies on the edge of development.

The HIV/AIDS catastrophe must also continue to be high on our agenda. The death and suffering caused by this terrible disease are tearing countries apart, particularly in Africa. This alarming situation needs the concerted action of the international community. Portugal fully supports these efforts and commends the Secretary-General for his particular commitment to this critical struggle.

Finally, we are striving for human rights and international law. As the Secretary-General points out, reports to the Commission on Human Rights paint

> "a bleak picture of the status of human rights in the world today". (*A/56/1, para. 196*)

We must continue to strive for universal respect for human rights. The United Nations and its human rights treaties provide the framework for the protection of the rights of individuals, particularly those most vulnerable.

Portugal supports the important work of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, whose Office should be provided with the necessary financial and human resources to respond to the crisis situations it faces on a daily basis. Voluntary contributions to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights are, of course, important, but it is the regular budget of the United Nations that must ensure the provision of such resources and so avoid disruptive fluctuations in the level of financing.

Finally, I turn to international law, which the Secretary-General rightly considers the sine qua non of a world of order and justice. Strengthening respect for the rule of law in international affairs is a crucial task for the Organization, and we welcome the efforts of the Secretariat in this regard. The ratification of treaties, codifying the commitments undertaken by Member States for international cooperation, and the growth of international law in general are critical to this process, as is the work of the ad hoc international tribunals and of the International Criminal Court in ensuring that there will be no impunity for war crimes or other violations of international humanitarian law. The Rome Statute has indeed opened a new chapter in international law, and we fully subscribe to the Secretary-General's appeal to Member States to establish their consent to be bound by the Statute and to support the important cause of the Court.

I have addressed the four broad areas of the United Nations activities covered in the Secretary-General's report. Of course, I could not be exhaustive in my comments, and many issues I did not mention equally deserve attention from the United Nations. What I wish to stress here today is the importance of concerted, international cooperation in meeting all of these challenges. Thus can we continue to strive to accomplish the aims set out in the preamble to the Charter of these United Nations.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, may I congratulate you on your election to preside over our work. We are certain that under your leadership the General Assembly will be successful in its work.

I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his important report on the work of the Organization. The report outlines a broad and objective view of the United Nations efforts in its various fields of action.

However, the report reveals another essential aspect of the Organization: the pivotal role of our Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, whose leadership has been essential in the institutional reform of the United Nations so that it may carry out its important duties in the contemporary world. At this critical moment for the international community, his moral stature grows still greater.

The General Assembly will have the opportunity to discuss the issue of terrorism in plenary meetings. However, I cannot fail to mention the challenge that that scourge represents for the Organization and for all of us. The expressions of solidarity over the loss of lives in the United States should be translated into a broad coalition in the name of tolerance and with the purpose of combating the underground networks of terror.

As the Secretary-General has indicated, the United Nations is the proper forum for this purpose and can ensure the global legitimacy of a long-term response to this threat. Terrorism is an enemy that, in order to attain its hateful objectives, makes destructive use of the instruments that characterize globalization: means of transportation, the instantaneous nature of modern communications, and the speed of financial transactions.

It is impossible to fight terrorism without the cooperation of all States. This is a task that, by its very nature, requires the resolute support of all, without exception. The Security Council must act with determination, in accordance to its mandate, in order to avoid a repetition of tragedies such as that which struck the world on 11 September.

Returning to the report of the Secretary-General, I would say that the same determination is necessary to find lasting solutions to the various conflicts that afflict the world, especially on the African continent and in

the Middle East. We must be obsessive about finding solutions to these conflicts.

Despite the continuation of armed conflicts in various regions, East Timor stands out as a paradigmatic example of the ability of the United Nations to transform a situation when it comes to promoting peace. We must build upon that base, and we therefore hope that the Member States will continue to support the people of East Timor so that the progress made can be consolidated and extended.

Also in the area of peace and international security, we agree with the Secretary-General that the Brahimi report represents an important contribution to improving the performance of peace operations.

However, we are concerned that the reports of the Secretary-General on the protection of civilians in armed conflict and on conflict prevention are not receiving the same level of attention from Member States. The recommendations in those reports deserve careful analysis and action as soon as possible.

Equally important in promoting a stable world order is the affirmation of the international rule of law. We agree with the Secretary-General's evaluation of the deterrent effect the International Criminal Court will have in preventing massive violations of humanitarian law and human rights. The implementation of the International Criminal Court will be a positive step towards a more humane world order.

Another no less important issue is that of our need to redouble international efforts to mitigate the corrosive effects that extreme poverty and lack of opportunities have upon peace-building in the world.

The Millennium Summit set out fundamental objectives for eradicating poverty and promoting development. Member States pledged to reduce by half the number of persons living on less than $1 per day by 2015. The problem continues to be how to achieve that objective. The Secretary-General's "Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration" (A/56/326) is an important step in that direction. The road map proposes a set of indicators that will make it possible for the international community to follow and evaluate the progress achieved towards the goals of development and sustainable development, including in the area of the commitments undertaken by developed countries.

There are no recipes applicable to every situation, but we know that there can be no development or eradication of poverty without access to markets for the exports of developing countries and without predictable and sustainable financial flows to support the implementation of public policies. In order to eradicate poverty a more favourable international environment must be combined with a national commitment to ensure that individuals are at the centre of the development process. In addition, international cooperation for development should support efforts to establish more just and egalitarian societies and more transparent and democratic political systems.

The International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in 2002 will be an opportunity to establish innovative mechanisms in that area. We attach high priority to the conference as part of the efforts to achieve the goals established at the Millennium Summit. For my country, which served as the host for the historic United Nations Conference on Environment and Development — held in Rio de Janeiro — the assessment of progress and new challenges in the implementation of Agenda 21 remains crucial. The year 2002 will therefore require great effort to make progress in the practical implementation of the concept of sustainable development. This, in turn, will demand determination and political will to confront such problems as unsustainable patterns of production and consumption.

This is a period in which we are seeking answers to help us understand how the terrible attacks of 11 September could happen. In addition to specific and immediate measures against terrorism, the work of the Organization as a whole can help prevent the recurrence of similar tragedies. If we are effective in the field of disarmament — including in the areas of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and small arms — and if we overcome the risk of unilateral solutions, we can create a safer international environment and avoid catastrophic scenarios such as the hypothetical mix of terrorism with weapons of mass destruction. If we promote development, combat discrimination, increase respect for human rights and succeed in making the United Nations an effective tool for the prevention and resolution of conflict, it will be more difficult to exploit feelings of despair and political and social exclusion to manipulate and exacerbate extremist hatred.

At a time when all of humankind is confronting a challenge of colossal proportions, the United Nations is more necessary than ever to create a horizon of harmony and prosperity for all peoples. In other words, we must together build globalization imbued with solidarity. The United Nations is undoubtedly the best instrument for that purpose.

Mr. Sychov (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): My delegation would like to extend its thanks to the Secretary-General for introducing his report on the work of the Organization. As in previous years, our delegation regards the report as a solid foundation for a thorough analysis of the work of the United Nations in the past year and for defining the main areas and priorities for the future.

The fact that the Secretary-General has been elected to a second term, even before the end of his first term, is symbolically important as we consider his report. We wish Mr. Kofi Annan success in this new difficult stage of the United Nations development and are ready to offer him our full support and cooperation in his work.

The first year of this new century has shown the entire world community the full scale and scope of existing problems. The acts of terrorism that shook the world on 11 September of this year clearly illustrate the need for concrete global response to global challenges. We think that this is the perspective from which we should look at the work of the United Nations today. Belarus joined the States of the world in their strong condemnation of the unprecedented acts of terrorism against major cities of the United States. The President and Government of Belarus immediately conveyed their sympathies and condolences to the American people on their pain, which has now become the pain of the world community.

We welcome the proposal for an immediate and comprehensive discussion on the problems of combating terrorism, which is to begin in the General Assembly next week. Belarus will actively participate in working out collective initiatives to counter this most heinous contemporary global phenomenon. Only the collective machinery at the disposal of the United Nations system can help us to find a comprehensive response to this challenge and to prevent its future repetition.

Globalization has recently been the subject of theoretical and scientific research. But today globalization has become part of people's daily lives. In this connection, we welcome the focus of the United Nations on practical results in this area. The Declaration adopted at the Millennium Summit established the reliable foundation for moving ahead in directions assigned priority by the international community. Development is the point of departure here, a priority that we indeed believe is the only real of way of ensuring further progress by the Member States of the United Nations in the era of globalization.

We share the Secretary-General's approach and his desire to look at development as an integrated whole. The realities of the world today show that economics, the environment, finance and natural resources are all increasingly interrelated and impact directly on the maintenance of international peace and security and conflict prevention and management. In this connection it is appropriate to stress the need for a comprehensive and consistent strategy for conflict prevention. Discussing the recommendations submitted by the Secretary-General last July is very productive. In essence we need to focus the work of the Organization on prevention and on alerting everyone to hotbeds of instability, for ignoring them, as we have unfortunately seen, would have consequences that cannot be remedied.

We must continue to strengthen peacekeeping and peace-building machinery. The decisions and recommendations of the General Assembly and the Security Council with regard to the recommendations of the Brahimi report should be implemented. In this connection, we will soon sign a memorandum of understanding with the Secretariat on participation in stand-by arrangements and are ready to make our contribution to this work.

The Secretary-General's report contains many references to various aspects of the situation in Africa. Africa has for a long time been a focus of United Nations attention; but we are now for the first time seeing some indication of improvement and stabilization. This includes prospects for significant progress in Ethiopia and Eritrea, Burundi, Somalia and some positive trends in Angola and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We think it is very important for all bodies in the United Nations system — and primarily the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council — not to lose momentum, but to continue to actively support and assist African States to overcome their many problems.

We cannot confine ourselves to discussing this issue and calling for action. Today, in order to resolve the truly difficult problems, we must also exploit the potential of regional organizations. In this context, we are convinced that the African Union must become a reliable partner of the United Nations.

One source of problems in guaranteeing international peace and security is the very unsettling situation in the Middle East. Belarus is convinced that there is no alternative to establishing an independent Palestinian State through political negotiations based on strict respect for the Security Council's resolutions and the decisions of other international forums. This is the only way to ensure respect for the inalienable right of the Palestinians to self-determination and to guarantee Israel's security interests. It is regrettable that the Security Council was unable last year to achieve consensus on a possible United Nations presence in the region during these difficult times.

As a State of Europe, Belarus shares the concern expressed in the Secretary-General's report over the ongoing instability in the Balkans. The crisis in that region has truly widened and there are continuing ethnic divisions and the threat of territorial war. We believe that the Security Council must focus more on analysing and determining how to solve the problem. The international community must lead the peacekeeping efforts in the region in order to avoid any further serious outbreak of war.

Considerable attention is devoted to disarmament in the report on the work of the Organization. The past year clearly showed that there are many outstanding and urgent problems in this respect. The statistics on global military budgets are alarming and the Secretary-General affirms that further active efforts are needed. Belarus is resolved to taking such steps. In 2000, we deposited instruments of ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. In February this year, medium- and short-range missiles inspections were completed on our territory, putting our country in full compliance with all the provisions of the Treaty. Our adherence to a responsible export control policy is reflected in the fact that we joined the Nuclear Suppliers Group in 2000.

Belarus welcomes the Secretary-General's assessment in his report of the threat posed by the deployment of national missile defence systems, which would have a negative impact not only on existing bilateral and multilateral arms control agreements, but also on current and future disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. In our sincere opinion, the realities of today's world confirm the great importance of this issue. The establishment of new weapons systems cannot overshadow contemporary priorities focused on creating a climate conducive to sustainable development.

In developing ideas on the interrelationship between security and development in this century, our delegation welcomes the intensive work being done this year to prepare for the International Conference on Financing for Development. We feel that that forum must establish an entirely new international consensus on global economic and financial problems related to development. Belarus believes that a consensus must be built that takes account of the specific interests and needs of countries at different stages of economic and social development. The message of the President of the Republic of Belarus, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, to the Secretary-General clearly set forth our support for the Secretary-General's recommendations on the need for the direct and paramount participation of the Governments of all interested countries, along with representatives of the private sector, non-governmental organizations and civil society. The success of the Monterey Conference will in turn be very important to our moving ahead in preparation for the World Summit on Sustainable Development in South Africa in 2002.

In the context of preparations for that meeting, we cannot fail to stress the need to address the consequences of man-made disasters. In the context of this year's sorrowful fifteenth anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster, it is all the more evident that this problem is also related to ensuring sustainable development, primarily in the affected territories, and requires the full attention of the international community. We are convinced that the United Nations will keep this in mind as it prepares its future strategy on coping with the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

As we analyse the Secretary-General's report and compare it to past reports in the light of recent events, we are all aware today of the need for unity in the actions of the international community to achieve a future of dignity. It is again clear that the United Nations can and must be the effective source of such unity. Achieving it will not be easy, but it is possible.

The Government of the Republic of Belarus is willing to work with all other Member States to that end.

Sir Jeremy Greenstock (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom is profoundly grateful to the Secretary-General for his latest report on the work of the United Nations. It is, as always, a thoughtful reflection on the work of the Organization and on the way ahead. Together with the Millennium Declaration issued by heads of State and Government in September 2000 and with the road map for the implementation of that Declaration, it sets clear signposts for the year and years ahead.

Since 11 September, we have all realized that we have another — and, in the short to medium term, overwhelming — priority: to deal with the scourge of terrorism. The attacks on the United States did not merely do grave injury to our host city, our host country and its citizens, and to the citizens of nearly 80 other States. As the Secretary-General said yesterday, they struck at everything for which the United Nations stands: peace, freedom, tolerance, human rights and the very idea of a united human family.

The United Kingdom shares the horror and the profound grief caused by these atrocities. The British list of the missing itself runs into the hundreds. When it is clear who is responsible for those actions and who has supported, protected or abetted those responsible, the United Kingdom will contribute to bringing them to account.

But, collectively, the membership of the United Nations has to do more than that. The United Nations set a structure in place for the period from 1945 onwards to prevent the return of global conflict. In that, the Organization has been successful. But the structures which we have in place — political, military and legal — have been primarily focused to deal with the main threat of the past period, that of war between States. Our challenge now is to make sure that we have structures to deal with the present and future threats we face, of which the threat of terrorism is now the most immediate. We cannot afford to make the mistake that was committed between the two World Wars of the twentieth century: to imagine that our adversaries share the same values, basic rules and assumptions about how human beings, even in conflict and war, should behave towards one another. We have to acknowledge that the people who plotted, organized and carried out these attacks in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania on 11 September were not people who accept any of the rules or values that the vast majority of people in the world would recognize.

That is why the United Kingdom Government, from the Prime Minister downwards, have stated so clearly in public and in private that this is not a clash of institutions or religions, and particularly not an argument with Islam. As a further example of our getting our priorities right, the United Kingdom has, since 11 September, allocated considerable further funding to the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan.

The United Kingdom will be contributing, together with our partners in the European Union, to the debate on terrorism which will start in the General Assembly on 1 October. We must transform our traditional methods of diplomacy to bring some good out of this evil. On the one hand, we must not be deflected from our attempts to resolve conflicts, defuse tensions and build peace in the troubled regions of the world, whether this be the Middle East, the Balkans, Africa or elsewhere. The terrorists will want all those efforts to fail. But we now have another urgent duty: to ensure that no one, whether States or individuals, harbours, supports, finances or encourages terrorism. The international community must unite as never before to take determined, collective action against the threat that terrorism and its supporters pose to global security. We will support action both in the Security Council and in the General Assembly to achieve those joint and comprehensive objectives.

Terrorism is ultimately self-defeating. We Member States, collectively, have to channel the rage and revulsion which we feel into effective decisions to ensure the triumph of the civilized values for which the Charter of the United Nations stands. In setting ourselves that aim and acting upon it in unison, the United Nations will emerge an even stronger Organization.

But we cannot allow our determination to combat terrorism to divert us from action to meet the other global challenges which confront us. I want to highlight some of the global issues on which we have to concentrate in the months ahead.

The battle against poverty must remain at the heart of our collective effort. The financing-for-development process will be the principal forum for our debate on this issue until the Conference in Monterrey in March next year. We have set ourselves

clear, global development goals at United Nations conferences and at the Millennium Summit. Financing for development gives us the opportunity to find the resources to meet those goals: national and international, public and private.

Monterrey must rise above the all too familiar Second Committee squabbles about who is responsible for the unsatisfactory results so far in addressing the needs of developing countries. The fact is that we are all responsible. At the extreme ends of the spectrum, it may be selfishness, callousness or incompetence that is getting in the way. For most of us, however, it means that we have so far failed to establish a common purpose which overrides our political or philosophical differences. At Monterrey we have to develop a programme for collective action which is more effective in addressing the problems of the developing world than any previous efforts. The European Union will be contributing strongly to that end, as the Belgian Presidency will make clear in this debate later today.

Beyond Monterrey, we have set ourselves the task of looking at the broader picture of sustainable development at the Johannesburg Summit next autumn. We have to face up to the fact that we have not got it right since Rio. We have not met the challenges of building sustainable development on the foundations of economic performance, social strength and protection of the environment. This time we must ensure that we get each of these equally important pillars in place and bearing the right load.

2002 will also ask us to maintain our promise to the world's children and ensure that the special session on children takes forward materially the protection of their rights and their well-being. Can we really yet say that we have given children the priority they deserve, over and above the competing priorities of national politics? It is time to deliver for the next generation. And let us not forget the world's older persons, who look to the World Assembly on Ageing next April for real results.

As important as the new agenda is, we still have to keep our promises inherited from the old one. The United Nations peacekeeping and conflict-prevention capacities must be enhanced, along the lines of the Brahimi report. Effective follow-up to the General Assembly's special session on AIDS must also be a priority. The agendas from Beijing, including pushing forward the cause of the gender mainstreaming of our work here in New York, and from Copenhagen and Istanbul, all remain on the table. It is a mark against the international community that we still have work to do to consolidate human rights as the foundation for our global programme of human advancement.

In no continent is it more important that we pull together these difficult and demanding agendas than in Africa. We have focused our rhetoric on Africa for too long without achieving the dramatic changes that are necessary. Now Africans have themselves responded in establishing the New African Initiative. The United Kingdom applauds them for taking their responsibilities seriously and working on the programmes that are flowing as a result. The United Kingdom Government, at the highest level, is taking a detailed interest in the progress of the New African Initiative and will contribute materially to it. Programmes based on partnership, which will itself ensure a comprehensive approach, must guide the United Nations response, across the different organs and agencies of the Organization. And those organs and agencies must themselves find a way of acting corporately and cooperatively, moving beyond the anachronistic inhibitions which still haunt our corridors.

It is time that we all recognized that, to meet the demanding targets we have set ourselves, the involvement of Governments alone is not enough. Success in all these endeavours will need the United Nations to develop its partnerships with civil society, whose voice must be heard in our debates. The energy of the private sector, in all its many manifestations, also has to be captured. The Secretary-General's Global Compact is gaining support, and with that support can generate significant results. Ordinary people must understand the relevance of the United Nations, because our work only matters if it makes a difference to them. In other words, our work in New York must become less narrow and more responsive to the real needs of a rapidly changing world.

I have confidence that under your leadership, Mr. President, and in the light of the consistent and forward-looking guidance offered to us by our Secretary-General, this Assembly will take our whole agenda forward with vigour and practical efficiency.

Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Mr. van den Berg (Netherlands): This afternoon, Belgium will make a statement on behalf of the European Union to which the Netherlands fully subscribes. But I wish to make a few remarks on the national level.

The attacks on the United States on 11 September have changed our lives, our work and our goals. We are saddened and angered. The international community and the United Nations as an organization have rallied together to condemn and combat the scourge of international terrorism. We also have to reflect and refocus on what we deem important as human beings and as a global community. Looking back at the past year of the United Nations would somehow appear marginal if we did not consider at the same time the work of the Organization in the light of the horrific and uprooting events of two weeks ago.

But first and foremost, I should like to emphasize the profound admiration the Government of the Netherlands has for the huge and varied work done by the United Nations. That goes for the United Nations system as a whole, but certainly also for all the achievements of United Nations Headquarters in New York. Considering the relatively limited financial and human resources of the Organization, the United Nations manages to get a tremendous amount of work done, especially in the field of cross-border problems such as combating HIV/AIDS, poverty eradication, global climate issues, refugee problems and, last but not least, terrorism.

Indisputable as it is, the huge workload of the United Nations will inevitably be affected by the need to contemplate the agenda for the near future. As the Secretary-General has reminded us, we need to address the conditions that permit the growth of hatred and depravity. We thus need to look at root causes, such as conflict, disease, poverty and ignorance. We have to remove the conditions that may create a breeding ground for the insanity of terrorism. The dramatic events of 11 September have demonstrated the need to address those global issues. The United Nations should take the lead and can make a real difference. And we believe that the United Nations can make a difference, not only when it comes to combating cross-border terrorism, but also in those other fields where individual Governments need overarching direction and the support of the international community. There is an immediate urge to address in an operational and result-oriented way, for the world at large, the issues of safety, security and the international rule of law. Let me therefore highlight a few issues that the United Nations, given the obvious linkages, needs to address as a matter of urgency.

The first is enhancing the rule of law. Eliminating the scourge of terrorism requires a broad and global coalition. The 12 United Nations conventions against terrorism must come into full effect, and they be must be enforced. All nations that have not done so yet should therefore sign and ratify all United Nations conventions against terrorism, including the International Convention for the Suppression of the Financing of Terrorism.

As another step in the war against terrorism, we want the International Criminal Court to be established without further delay. Impunity for crimes against humanity is unacceptable. Those who are guilty of crimes against humanity should be individually held accountable, and the community of States should bring them to justice. During the upcoming preparatory meeting for the International Criminal Court here in New York, the Netherlands will maintain its commitment to that goal by pursuing the necessary arrangements for the establishment of the Court.

Let me now make a few remarks on development. When it comes to eliminating the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and stability, the United Nations has to play its part. The Millennium Declaration helped to create a sense of urgency, and the present debate provides an occasion for the international community to take stock of our joint efforts, and to deliberate on and provide guidelines for the future course of action. In our view, the international community has to step up those efforts. That is why the Netherlands strongly urges all developed countries to adhere to the international target of devoting 0.7 per cent of gross domestic product to official development assistance.

But we need to do more, and we need to do better. Poverty and other threats to durable peace and security can be effectively addressed only as a common endeavour of the States in the United Nations system. In that regard, the International Conference on Financing for Development will be a first test.

By doing that we will set the goals of the United Nations as an organization higher. The input of the Secretariat in our decision-making process will be challenged by our increasing demand to come to grips

with the true overarching global phenomena we face. Yet, as a percentage of world gross domestic product, we spend only 0.0000-something per cent — in short, a negligible amount of world gross domestic product — on the Organization's Secretariat, funds, programmes and specialized agencies. I simply ask: is that really sufficient? Let us reflect on that question.

With the new agenda taking shape on the basis of the goals set by the Millennium Declaration and the report (A/55/305) of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations chaired by Mr. Lakhdar Brahimi, I should like to assure the Assembly that the Government of the Netherlands stands ready to play an active role and expects other delegations to do likewise. Member States have to be innovative, forward-looking and not unduly bothered by too-detailed management of the Organization. The Netherlands, for one, has total confidence in the way the Secretary-General, as chief executive officer, manages the Organization, thus freeing us Member States from cumbersome micro-management and enabling us to focus on broader lines of policy.

The present state of the world gives us a chance to bring the United Nations to its full potential. Let us not fail in that endeavour.

Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus): I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to Mr. Han Seung-soo on his election as President of the General Assembly at its fifty-sixth session. I would like also to convey my appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Harri Holkeri, for the determined and effective leadership with which he guided the work of the fifty-fifth session and for his efforts to rationalize and improve the functioning of the General Assembly.

On behalf of the Government and the people of Cyprus, I reiterate our deep condolences, solidarity and sympathy to the Government and the people of the United States in connection with the tragic loss of innocent lives and of property caused by the abhorrent terrorist acts of 11 September. We strongly condemn those barbaric acts, which we consider to have been attacks against humanity. Our sympathy goes also to the families of the nationals of many countries who perished or are missing following that senseless crime. The assault may have been harsh and extremely painful, but it has not broken our spirit or weakened our determination to stand together in the struggle for the preservation of the fundamental principles of civilization.

I would like to join previous speakers in expressing appreciation to Secretary-General Mr. Kofi Annan for his lucid and thought-provoking report. His recommendations, if implemented faithfully, would contribute greatly towards achieving the goals for which the United Nations was created. I would furthermore like to extend warm congratulations on his well-deserved re-election to the post of Secretary-General and pledge Cyprus' support to his efforts and initiatives that have substantially elevated the prestige of our Organization.

My head of State will address all the important items included in the report during the general debate. I will therefore, with your indulgence, limit my remarks to the situation in Cyprus, which is covered in paragraph 39 of the report. In this paragraph, the Secretary-General describes briefly his efforts at resuming the talks, under his auspices, following the withdrawal from the negotiations by the Turkish Cypriot leader, Mr. Denktash, with the full backing of the Turkish political and military leadership in November of last year. The Secretary-General mentions his efforts at encouraging Mr. Denktash to return to the negotiations and his meeting with him last month in Salzburg.

Following that meeting, the Special Advisor of the Secretary-General, Mr. Alvaro de Soto, embarked on a mission in Cyprus from 28 August to 5 September 2001. On 5 September, he extended, on behalf of the Secretary-General, official invitations to President Clerides and Mr. Denktash to come to New York on 12 September to resume negotiations. President Clerides immediately accepted the invitation and stated his readiness to come to New York. Mr. Denktash, however, in another outburst of his well-known intransigence, rejected it, which caused great disappointment and generated public statements of disapproval from many States, the European Union, as well as Turkish Cypriot political parties and Turkish personalities.

Ignoring the call by the United Nations that the time has come to engage in an intense period of work so that it would be possible to report progress on issues of substance before the end of the year, the Turkish Cypriot leader, with the support of Ankara, continues to this day to insist on placing preconditions before he

returns to the negotiations, preconditions that are contrary to Security Council resolutions, in particular 541 (1983), 550 (1984) and 1250 (1999).

Despite the fact that the Secretary-General of the United Nations has publicly expressed the view that the ground for the resumption of the talks had long been prepared, Mr. Denktash this time finds another way to procrastinate by attempting to exploit and deliberately misinterpret the statement of the Secretary-General of 12 September of last year and calls for continuing contacts for finding common ground and for the creation of a new partnership. In essence, he has embarked on yet another attempt at presenting his proposal for a confederation of two equal sovereign States in Cyprus.

The Turkish side tries to justify this unacceptable position, which is contrary to Security Council resolutions and the two high-level Agreements of 1977 and 1979 that bear Mr. Denktash's own signature, by the need, as they call it, to accept the so-called realities on the ground. These realities, as they say, are the separation of the two communities and the existence of religious and ethnic differences between them. The Turkish side, however, deliberately chooses to ignore that the separation of the two communities was a direct consequence of Turkey's partitionist designs against Cyprus and her invasion and subsequent occupation of 37 per cent of Cypriot territory.

As to their second argument, may I remind Members that at a time when both Cyprus and Turkey are candidates for accession to the European Union, where emphasis is placed on tolerance and multiculturalism, the attempt to present differences in religion and ethnicity as the raison d'être of creating two different States in Cyprus is at least suspect and grossly anachronistic.

As is well known, the international community has repeatedly rejected this policy. The plethora of United Nations resolutions provides ample proof of that. Acceptance of the so-called realities on the ground would create a very dangerous precedent in international affairs, striking at the very heart of the cherished principles of State sovereignty, territorial integrity and international law.

The reality of the situation in Cyprus, as has been repeatedly recognized by the international community, is as follows. First, there is the presence of 36,000 Turkish occupation troops; secondly, there have been massive human rights violations by Turkey and its subordinate local administration in the occupied area, as confirmed by the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights, in the Loizidou vs. Turkey case and the more recent decision on the Fourth State Recourse by Cyprus against Turkey; thirdly, there is the repression of our Turkish Cypriot compatriots by a regime that brands everyone objecting to its policies as traitors and has already forced one third of the Turkish Cypriot community into emigration.

Fourthly, there is a deliberate policy to alter the demographic character of the island through the illegal implantation of Turkish mainland settlers in the occupied area; and last but not least, there have been numerous lost opportunities for Cyprus and all its people, particularly the Turkish Cypriot community, stemming from the forced division of the island.

In conclusion, despite our disappointment at the lack of political will and the many obstacles on the road to peace placed by the Turkish side, the Government of Cyprus and President Clerides will continue to display a constructive approach and the necessary political will for the resolution of the Cyprus problem, a solution that would usher in a new era of peace, prosperity and security for all Cypriots, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots alike.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): This year, as we address ourselves to the Secretary-General's annual report, we should be performing more than just a ritual. It is a different year that we look at in retrospect. The Millennium year, the first of the twenty-first century, as it will be remembered in history, started with a renewed commitment of the United Nations membership at the highest level to the timeless and universal purposes and principles of the Charter. Our leaders adopted the historic Millennium Declaration last year as a blueprint of their vision for the twenty-first century.

It is not a time for clichés and the same old complimentary or critical comments on the Secretary-General's report. I think this comprehensive, focused and action-oriented report has been overtaken by events. The Secretary-General has himself added a postscript to his own report. We all read the other day his op-ed article in *The New York Times*, which could be made a new chapter of his report as an adjunct. He defines, in the wake of what we all saw with horror and shock in this city and in the city of Washington, a new

challenge to humanity and the need for a global response. Terrorism is a universal evil with tentacles in all societies, irrespective of religion, ethnicity and even the level of affluence or development.

The events of 11 September certainly came as a wake-up call, not to any one country or any one society, but to humanity as a whole. Consequently, humanity now has to respond to this challenge — this universal evil. Our response must not be based on retribution alone, nor on emotion or anger. It must be guided by wisdom and an understanding of the facts, and motivated by the need to remedy the disease by addressing its root causes.

Terrorism lurks in the shadows and the wilderness. It breeds on disillusionment, suspicion, fear and hopelessness. It is fed by ignorance and poverty. It is exploited by hatred, bigotry, resentment and the perceived invasion of cultures. The roots of terrorism lie in the inequity of societies, in the despair of slums and in the bewilderment of the human soul. This is a problem that has to be dealt with in a long-term manner. It needs a new, measured, sustained and holistic approach, which aims at rooting out the injustice and oppression that lie at the heart of this phenomenon.

The Secretary-General rightly said in his article in *The New York Times* that the United Nations, as a representative body of humanity, is uniquely placed to mobilize a concerted and continued response to the challenge that is before us. Let us hold each other's hands. Let us not turn our backs on each other. Let us strengthen each other. Let us respect each other and each other's culture and value systems. Let us enable this world body to play its role under the Charter in preventing conflict and resolving disputes. Let us persevere, as the Secretary-General has said, in creating a stronger, more just, more benevolent and more genuine international community.

We in Pakistan abhor and condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including State terrorism. We agree with the Secretary-General that the United Nations provides the forum and global legitimacy for a universal response against terrorism. Pakistan has pledged its full and unstinting support in the fight against international terrorism. This is a pledge rooted in our abiding commitment to the principles for which my country stands. In the past, when the world was polarized by two ideologies, we deliberately chose the side that stood for freedom and justice. Today, we again stand on the side of right, and we are still upholding the flag of freedom, tolerance and justice.

In the light of the changed situation, my comments on the Secretary-General's report will have to be selective and focused. Indeed, we are today at a crossroads, facing yet another defining moment. The last century was full of many defining moments. We saw great upheavals, in the form of economic disaster and great wars, during the first half of the twentieth century. The United Nations itself was born out of these upheavals so as to provide a moral edifice for the reordering of the global system. In the perennial struggle that characterizes the history of mankind, the United Nations was created to uphold what is good and combat what is evil.

Multilateral cooperation was to be the norm for resolving all global problems. The United Nations, which we have termed mankind's "last best hope", was to chart the way to a new and better world — a world free of violence, injustice and oppression. The United Nations also signified the dawn of decolonization, as the age of colonial and racial powers had run its course. In those early decades — the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s — the peoples of Kashmir, Palestine, South Africa, Namibia and scores of other regions won legitimacy, as well as political and moral endorsement, for their just causes. Unfortunately, the world today is still experiencing violence, injustice and oppression. The struggle of those who remain deprived of their legitimate, inalienable rights continues.

We note in the Secretary-General's report the reference to both Kashmir and Palestine. They are two of the longest unresolved disputes of our time. We agree with his assessment, in paragraph 29 of the report, that

> "The conflict between Israelis and Palestinians can be resolved only through a political settlement."

We also agree with his observation that the tragic loss of life has underlined the urgency of reaching a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict on the basis of Security Council resolutions. His observations on Palestine are equally valid for Kashmir, where thousands of innocent lives have also been lost, necessitating an early solution of

the problem in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council.

We are happy that the Secretary-General was able to visit South Asia in March this year and lent his support for the resumption of bilateral dialogue between Pakistan and India. The dialogue was, indeed, resumed later in the year.

We hope that the Secretary-General and the international community will continue to encourage this dialogue with a view to enabling it to reach a meaningful, logical and honourable conclusion — that is, a final settlement of the Kashmir issue in accordance with Security Council resolutions and in conformity with the legitimate wishes and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Pakistan, for its part, remains fully committed to sustaining a purposeful and results-oriented dialogue with India with a view to finding a just and equitable settlement of the core dispute of Kashmir and addressing all other outstanding issues.

We seek durable peace with India. Both of our countries need to free themselves from the legacy of the last century and begin a new relationship that focuses on the socio-economic well-being of our peoples.

Another conflict which has eluded resolution for over two decades is the one in Afghanistan. Today it is the focus of the world community, in a tragic context. As the international community responds to the current crisis, it must also address the grave humanitarian situation in that country through reconstruction and reconciliation. We welcome the Secretary-General's offer in his report that the United Nations is prepared to assist

> "in the political, developmental and humanitarian fields in order to address the root causes of instability" *(A/56/1, para. 33)*.

Pakistan has for more than two decades borne the burden of millions of Afghan refugees. We continue to host the world's largest refugee population, which reached a peak figure of 4.5 million in the 1980s, while international assistance has continued to progressively decline. As rightly pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report, this year alone 200,000 Afghans have left their homes due to the protracted conflict and the acute drought conditions and sought shelter in Pakistan. With the situation unfolding before us, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is of the view that at least 1.5 million, if not more, Afghan refugees may enter Pakistan. Just imagine the magnitude of this crisis. We are already burdened with 2.5 million refugees and are facing the prospect of another 1.5 million arriving in Pakistan.

How the international community copes with the impending humanitarian crisis will be a real test, not only of its ability but also of its moral responsibility. We appreciate the personal interest that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Ruud Lubbers, is taking in this emerging humanitarian crisis, and we particularly appreciate the efforts that he has been making in recent weeks by contacting all of the donor countries, visiting different capitals and meeting all concerned people here at United Nations Headquarters.

We note with satisfaction that one area in which the United Nations has begun to improve its performance in the last year is that of peacekeeping. It is in no small measure a tribute to the determination of this Organization and of the world community to work effectively towards a common goal. Pakistan, as a leading troop-contributing country, has also played its due role both here at United Nations Headquarters and in the field. We, as ever, remain committed to supporting this Organization in its efforts to maintain international peace and security. We are encouraged by the Secretary-General's interest in conflict prevention and peacemaking, and we urge him to broaden the scope of his efforts and that of the Organization to cover those areas which have thus far not received due attention from the international community — conflict prevention, dispute resolution and peacemaking as well as peace-building.

Another area that deserves greater attention from the international community is the eradication of poverty. At the Millennium Summit, our leaders resolved to wage war on poverty by launching a sustained campaign to make the right to development a reality for everyone. We need concrete steps to achieve this goal, and everyone accepts that the responsibility for the realization of this goal lies both with the countries and the international community — at the national level and the global level.

We agree with the Secretary-General that if the international community is to meet its goals of

development and poverty eradication, economic growth in developing countries must accelerate. To this end, we are currently pursuing the financing for development process in a holistic manner, with the participation of all major stakeholders, including the Bretton Woods Institutions and the World Trade Organization. This process cannot produce miracles, but it is worth making a collective effort to create, on the basis of consensus, an enabling environment for socio-economic growth.

While we must do more, as the Secretary-General says, to render globalization inclusive and equitable for the international community, this daunting task has acquired added importance and urgency in light of the new grim reality we face today. The world community and this Organization must therefore think long and hard about its priorities and about the ways it deals with those parts of the world or those societies which have missed out on the benefits of our times. Thus, in the context of globalization, it becomes all the more necessary and urgent that the United Nations seriously review its policies and programmes to deal with the new challenge, which has unfortunately redefined this new century. We must therefore respond appropriately and review our policies. The conditions in which we live have been changed forever; let us hope that the best that is in our humanity has not.

The founding fathers of this Organization had a vision. They envisioned a future in which succeeding generations would live in peace and prosperity, a world order based on our faith in fundamental human rights, socio-economic equity, the rule of international law, the dignity of human beings and justice. Let us reaffirm those ideals and rededicate ourselves to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Ms. Løj (Denmark): Since this is the first time Denmark has taken the floor after the horrific events here in the United States on 11 September, I would like to offer my condolences to the United States, the American people and the families and friends of the innocent victims. Denmark most strongly condemns the forces behind this terrible act. The Danish Government and the Danish people stand by the United States both now and in the months to come. We are fully committed to the international efforts to ensure that those responsible for these acts of terrorism are brought to justice and punishment.

Having said this, I would like to congratulate the President and the Bureau of the General Assembly upon their election. They have gained very important positions at a time when strengthened international cooperation is called for more than ever. The recent catastrophic events in the United States have reminded us of the urgent need to act.

Terrorism is today the single most serious international threat to democracy and the rule of law, and thus to the functioning of our societies. It is essential that all countries redouble and unite their efforts in the fight against terrorism.

At an extraordinary meeting in the European Council last week, the European heads of State and Government called for the broadest possible global coalition against terrorism within the United Nations framework. They reaffirmed their belief that the United Nations, with its unique and universal mandate, is a fundamental player in the fight against terrorism and must act accordingly.

Firm and resolute action has already been demonstrated by the Security Council and the General Assembly; this was done the day after the attacks. It is our hope that this General Assembly will take concrete steps that could lead to a strengthening of international cooperation in combating international terrorism.

But we must go beyond that. We must ensure strengthened international cooperation in a wide range of areas. Only by reiterating our joint efforts will we prevail. We must show the world that we have the political will to act. Otherwise, we reduce ourselves to a redundant talking club that cannot be taken seriously.

The report of the Secretary-General reminds us of the complexity of the challenges we face. The report also illustrates that the United Nations can be instrumental in international cooperation to meet those challenges, and that it demands further political and financial support from all countries, as well as from the international donor community and domestic resources.

Denmark is fully committed to meeting the challenges. We devote more than 1 per cent of our gross domestic product to official development assistance, and we actively participate in United Nations deliberations and actions — not least the United Nations peacekeeping operations.

But not only Member States need to strengthen their effort. Enhancement of the effectiveness and

efficiency of the United Nations as an organization is also a prerequisite for success.

The reform process initiated by the Secretary-General has already shown positive results. A stronger focus and coordination of United Nations activities and programmes lead to greater impact. But further work needs to be done at all levels in order for the United Nations to function according to its potential.

Denmark also welcomes the efforts to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. We are pleased to note in the report that the peace-building and conflict prevention activities have been strengthened across the system, especially at field level.

Peace and security are fundamental conditions for economic, social and environmentally sustainable development. This has become ever more obvious during the last decade. Thus this year the Danish Government, in a reformulation of our development policy, decided to further strengthen our efforts to prevent conflicts.

As stressed in the report, we have to focus on Africa to support the growing will of African States and regional organizations to enhance their conflict-prevention capabilities.

Denmark has from the very outset been a major contributor to United Nations peacekeeping, both in terms of funds and soldiers. Unfortunately, the basis for the success of United Nations peacekeeping missions has not always been in place. This has caused United Nations failures in the field and severe suffering for many people. We must enhance the Organization's peacekeeping capabilities, including its capacity to deploy peacekeeping operations rapidly. Also the ability to provide humanitarian assistance to the millions that suffer as a consequence of conflicts all over the world is an integral part of establishing and maintaining peace and security.

The report of the Secretary-General underlines that the reality of the distressed civilian population has not changed significantly and that there are serious gaps in the United Nations humanitarian response to the needs of the millions of internally displaced persons. To complicate things, there are still widespread attacks on humanitarian workers.

These matters need to be addressed. The protection of civilians, humanitarian workers and United Nations personnel in armed conflict is first and foremost the responsibility of the host State. But an enhanced international effort is also called for and, not least, better coordination between all actors: local governments, civil society and the international community.

The Secretary-General speaks of critical link between peace, security and conflict prevention, on the one hand, and development and respect for all human rights on the other. This point cannot be stressed enough. The interlinkage is unquestionable. Both sides of the problem need to be addressed.

With a focus on the eradication of poverty, domestic and international commitments must go hand in hand in order to obtain the proper balance for development in all countries.

We fully agree with the statement made by the Secretary-General yesterday about the importance of trade for development, and we share his hope that the upcoming World Trade Organization meeting in Doha will result in the launching of a development-trade round. Furthermore, Denmark looks forward to engaging in the preparations for the Conference on Financing for Development and the Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in Johannesburg.

The Secretary-General in his report has once again highlighted the HIV/AIDS pandemic's global proportions and its devastating effect on development, not least in Africa. The outcome document from the special session on HIV/AIDS is a comprehensive basis for the fight against the pandemic, a fight that must always remain at the top of the international agenda.

Another cornerstone in the mandate of the United Nations is universal recognition of and respect for human rights. The report states that some progress was made during the fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Human Rights, but that

> "the task of achieving universal respect for human rights remains daunting". (*A/56/1, para. 197*)

The Danish Government welcomes the increased international acceptance of human rights mechanisms and adherence to crucial human rights conventions and protocols. But too many examples of individuals suffering from human rights violations remind us that a better implementation of universal rights is urgently called for.

Respect for human rights is fundamental to ensure future global, regional and national stability and social cohesion. The well-being of all people must be put at the forefront of all efforts. In this respect, I would like to draw attention to the decision mentioned in the report to establish the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Denmark looks forward to the Forum's first annual session, to be held in May 2002, and would like to underline that thorough preparation and the allocation of the necessary resources for the session are imperative.

The environment in which the United Nations is to function has changed with the recent tragic terrorist attacks here in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania. The world has become smaller. All over the world people have followed the events and have expressed their grief, despair and disbelief.

Let us together use this session of the General Assembly to define the role of the United Nations in this new environment. The Secretary-General stresses in his report that the strength of the United Nations is its capacity to adapt to changing international conditions. Let us prove that. We must make sure that the United Nations, with its broad-based and universally accepted mandate, keeps its central position in international cooperation. We can make it.

Mr. Mahbubani (Singapore): The report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization is dated 6 September 2001, five days before the fateful events of 11 September 2001, which will significantly change the course of world history and, consequently, that of the United Nations as well. Yesterday morning, when he introduced his report to the Assembly, the Secretary-General provided a thoughtful response to the events of 11 September. We support his views.

It is of course far too early to assess the impact of those events on the United Nations. But clearly one distinct possibility is that the international responsibilities of the United Nations may once again increase. The question will then be whether the United Nations is ready to take on those additional burdens. It may be useful to have that question at the back of our minds as we assess the health of the United Nations in reviewing the annual report card that the Secretary-General submits to the board of directors of the Organization, by which I mean the members of the General Assembly.

It may also be useful at this stage to review the lessons of the past decade. The moment that the United Nations faces now is similar to the one it experienced at the end of the cold war. The unfreezing of the old order led to a burst of promising events. The Security Council, which had been paralysed for much of the cold war, came together to solve many persistent conflicts. The united Gulf War coalition was another positive result. Peacekeeping activities flourished. But, as we all know, that promising start did not last. By the middle of the 1990s the United Nations again encountered significant failures, from Rwanda to Srebrenica. Once again, the United Nations became marginalized. The question is whether the next decade will see a repetition of that pattern.

In looking at long-term challenges facing the United Nations, we may find that one useful complement to the annual report is *Imagining Tomorrow*, published by the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations on the eve of the Millennium Summit last year, which contains a series of essays looking at long-term questions.

The annual report card before us today provides a good insight into the strengths, and some insights into the weaknesses, of the Organization. The report is well written, concise and analytical. The report also describes many of the bold initiatives that the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, has launched. Those have helped to improve the prestige and standing of the United Nations. Clearly, the leadership of Mr. Kofi Annan has made a significant difference. We are delighted that he has agreed to serve five more years. Both the United Nations and the world need his calm and quiet leadership, especially at difficult moments like the one we face now.

Unfortunately, one thing that the Secretary-General cannot do is to report on the performance of the board of directors, namely, the General Assembly. That is a pity. The Secretariat is just one member of the United Nations family. But the reputation of the United Nations is also determined by the performance of other members. Take our General Assembly, for example. We have had our share of ups and downs in the past year. The high point was the Millennium Summit last year. But all the subsequent special sessions and conferences appear to have run into trouble. The international media, as we all know, was particularly critical of the World Conference against Racism. As *The Washington Post* said,

> "The more the United Nations members allow the organization's name to be associated with the kind of posturing that went on in Durban, the more they stoke anti-UN feeling in key industrial nations."

It is therefore possible that some of the legislative processes within the United Nations have become dysfunctional. But that, as we all also know, is too complex a question to be addressed in this debate.

Similarly, the Security Council is another equally important member of the United Nations family. Here, fortunately, the General Assembly will have an opportunity to assess the Council's record over the past year, when it reviews the annual report of the Council on 4 October. The Secretary-General's report says:

> "For the United Nations, the concept of conflict prevention must be put into practice, and the rhetoric matched by action." (*A/56/1, para. 20*)

But only the Security Council has the power and authority to effectively engage in conflict prevention. The events of the past year show that the record of the Security Council, as it has been in previous years, remains a mixed one. Clearly, decisive Council intervention in Sierra Leone prevented a disastrous situation from emerging. However, the record in the Great Lakes region continues to be troubling. Even today, as we speak, the lessons of Rwanda are clearly not being applied to Burundi. We hope that next Thursday, when the General Assembly reviews the record of the Security Council, we will have an open and full debate on what we believe to be one of the most important issues facing the General Assembly this year.

The Secretary-General's report has an important section on peacekeeping and peace-building. Here, too, the decisions on where to deploy, how much to deploy and with what resources, are made not by the Secretariat, but by the Security Council. Some of those decisions are hard to understand. For example, why does the international community send over 45,000 troops and spend billions on a small province in Europe called Kosovo while sending less than 10 per cent of that number to a country that is almost as large as Western Europe: the Democratic Republic of the Congo? Even within Africa, the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) has an authorized force of 20,000, while other conflicts receive scant or no attention. Are the needs of Burundi, for example, any less pressing? Perhaps a persuasive case can be made for each peacekeeping decision taken by the Security Council, but a persuasive case has not been made to the international community that the final result reflects an allocation of resources based on the overall needs of the globe rather than on the national interests of a few countries.

Fortunately, on the peacekeeping front there are also some heartening success stories. One such success story may be emerging in East Timor. Following the successful elections held in East Timor in August of this year, a Constituent Assembly has been established, and it will decide on East Timor's Constitution and future form of government. But, given the traumatic recent history, the situation will remain fragile. It is therefore encouraging to see that in paragraph 70 of his report, the Secretary-General has said:

> "substantial international support should continue to be provided, through an integrated and well-coordinated mission led by a Special Representative, mandated by the Security Council and funded from assessed contributions."

We hope that the Security Council will refer to this quote when it considers the future of the peacekeeping operation in East Timor.

I have made several remarks about peacekeeping, even though only 30 paragraphs in a report that has 271 paragraphs deal with that subject. The reasons for this are simple.

Firstly, the annual assessed regular budget of the United Nations stands at around $1.3 billion per year. But this year the peacekeeping budget will reach $3 billion. We demonstrate our priorities with the financial decisions that we make. Clearly, we give more priority to peacekeeping than to the regular work.

Secondly, only the United Nations has the authority to make payments to peacekeeping operations mandatory. In this area there is finally some good news. In paragraph 235 of his report, the Secretary-General says that the failure of a number of major contributors to pay their dues has forced the United Nations to borrow from peacekeeping accounts to offset the earlier and larger than usual deficit currently being experienced. Fortunately, if the news of today is correct, we believe that some major payments of outstanding assessments will be made. As the

Secretary-General has correctly emphasized, in paragraph 235:

> "It is clear that the United Nations cannot function effectively unless all Member States pay their dues, in full, on time and without conditions."

I think this is something that we should keep repeating at every possible occasion.

The emphasis that we have given to peace and security issues does not mean that we attach any less importance to the rest of the work of the Organization. The remaining five chapters of the Secretary-General's report, chapters II to VI, are equally important. The United Nations is doing even more important work in other areas. We will be touching on these issues as we address specific agenda items, for example, the special needs of the African continent.

But one key issue does need to be mentioned here: development. Clearly, chapter III should be the most important chapter of this whole report. If peacekeeping issues touch the lives of a few hundred million people on our planet, development issues are the concern of five billion people. The United Nations has made many significant commitments in this field, including the grand commitment made at last year's Millennium Summit to halve the number of people living in poverty by 2015. In paragraph 129, the Secretary-General says:

> "If the international community is to meet its goals of development and poverty eradication, economic growth in developing economies must accelerate."

Unfortunately for us, even as we speak here today, the global economic situation looks increasingly difficult, and it will probably remain difficult in the coming months. This will add to the many difficulties that will be faced by next year's International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico. We hope that in next year's report the Secretary-General will come up with bold and imaginative solutions to development issues, which should remain the most important item of the United Nations work.

Hopefully, as in the call that he made for effective conflict prevention, the Secretary-General will also issue a similar appeal to all Governments to match their rhetoric with action on development issues. Unfortunately, the record of the past two decades shows instead the reverse. We hope that future reports of the Secretary-General will attempt to address how this and other disturbing trends in multilateral processes can be reversed. This will make such annual reports even more valuable to the Member States.

Mr. Navarrete (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Two weeks after 11 September, two weeks after that day of infamy, my delegation wishes to reiterate its condemnation of the criminal acts that were perpetrated and which filled us all with horror and indignation. It also wishes to reiterate its unreserved readiness to contribute, unhesitatingly and resolutely, to international actions aimed at bringing to justice the authors, organizers and sponsors of these abominable acts, in fulfilment of resolutions 56/1 of the General Assembly and 1368 (2001) of the Security Council, to avoid further occurrences of these outrageous acts.

As the Foreign Minister of Mexico stated last Friday in Washington, at the special meeting of foreign ministers of the Organization of American States:

> "Mexico again expresses its condolences to and solidarity with the Government and people of the United States of America for the terrible losses caused by the terrorist acts committed on its soil. It expresses its firm support — within the legal order which governs all of our nations — to extirpate the root of the evil of terrorism and to strengthen peace and security in our region and the world."

Following the high-level dialogue on cooperation, this is the first occasion on which the delegation of Mexico takes the floor in the plenary of the fifty-sixth regular session of the General Assembly. Allow me, therefore, to express our satisfaction at seeing the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea presiding over our deliberations. My delegation has every confidence that he will conduct this regular session — which, without doubt, has been transformed into an extraordinary session as a result of the adverse circumstances under which it has begun — with the good judgement, impartiality, intelligence and imagination that these circumstances require. I wish to extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau as well.

The President's distinguished predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Harri Holkeri — for whose highly successful stewardship my delegation is deeply

appreciative — did his utmost to restore the work of the General Assembly to its rightful place among the various tasks of the Organization. By working to enhance the effectiveness of this principal organ — the most representative and democratic in the United Nations — he sought to underscore the importance that should be given to the debate in which we are now engaged — that is, the debate on item 10 of our agenda, the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization.

This is not a routine item. It is not a mere formality. In assessing the report that the Secretary-General has submitted for the consideration of the Member States on the work of the Organization, we have the opportunity not only to evaluate and appraise what has been accomplished, but also to plan our future course of action. This debate must therefore be thoughtful, detailed and profound. It must not be limited to a series of declarations. We must go beyond that.

In resolution 55/285, on improving the efficiency of the General Assembly, adopted a few weeks ago at the initiative of the President Holkeri and his facilitator, the Permanent Representative of Chile, Ambassador Juan Gabriel Valdés, the Assembly placed particular emphasis on the debate on the report of the Secretary-General. It suggested that consideration of the report by the plenary of the General Assembly might continue with a more detailed review of its main contents. The Mexican delegation believes that at this session of the General Assembly, which is beginning in the adverse circumstances that we all regret, a step can be taken in the right direction.

After we have listened to the statements in the plenary, informal meetings open to all interested delegations might be held to discuss in greater depth the key issues raised in the report of the Secretary-General, in an interactive dialogue, with the participation of the Secretary-General himself and senior Secretariat officials. Only in this way can we do justice to the important document that is before us. Only thus can our discussion of it lead us to useful conclusions to guide the work of the Organization through this difficult period that we now face as a result of the shocking events of 11 September.

Even as we look forward to an opportunity to review in greater depth the rich and thought-provoking contents of the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, perhaps in the format that my delegation has suggested, permit me in this statement merely to highlight some of the issues that my delegation would like to see discussed in greater depth and detail.

One year has passed since the adoption of the Millennium Declaration. Mexico believes that the very credibility of the Organization depends on the effective follow-up of its timely implementation. One of the main tasks of the current session of the Assembly will be to consider and agree on a course of action to follow in this regard, based on the report of the Secretary-General on agenda item 29.

Of particular importance among the topics related to international peace and security is the culture of prevention, to which the Secretary-General referred in his important report on the prevention of armed conflict. Conflict prevention must undoubtedly become the centrepiece of the Organization's activities. Preventive measures must be comprehensive in their approach, involving the entire United Nations system and addressing all aspects related to the outbreak of conflicts. Emphasis must be placed on both conflict prevention and peace-building in order to prevent the recurrence of conflict.

Special importance must therefore be given to capacity-building within each country in areas such as the organization of free and impartial elections, the training of civilian police, the protection of human rights, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, and the strengthening of democratic institutions. The relationship between the United Nations and countries affected by conflict, through the Secretary-General, must therefore be strengthened, bearing in mind the negotiating capacity and political presence of the Organization, which can prevent the outbreak or the worsening of conflicts.

In addition, within the framework of a comprehensive strategy of prevention, the United Nations should concentrate its efforts on addressing, in a timely and effective manner, the root causes of conflict. No one can deny that poverty and social discontent unleash situations of instability that can lead to large-scale conflict. Our Organization must continue to lead the fight against poverty and to promote economic development so as to address the root causes of conflicts.

Sanctions are one of the mechanisms available to the Security Council under the Charter to restore international peace and security. We share the view of the Secretary-General that efforts must be made to ensure that sanctions do not unduly affect innocent populations or third States and that they are targeted at the real violators of international law. We urge the Council to continue to consider ways of achieving this important objective. My delegation considers that the Security Council is the only organ with the authority to impose sanctions and rejects unilateral measures as a means of political or economic coercion.

The Secretary-General stated in his report that a difference of opinion still exists as to priorities in the field of disarmament. Mexico is convinced that the international community must be guided by the priorities contained in the Final Document adopted at the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament. That document states that nuclear disarmament is the first priority. Mexico reiterates its commitment to the elimination of nuclear weapons. It also reaffirms its support for the proposal of the Secretary-General, as reflected in the Millennium Declaration, to convene an international conference to identify ways of eliminating the danger of nuclear weapons. Now that the United Nations has considered the subject of small arms and light weapons at its Conference held this past summer, Member States should focus their attention on weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons because of the continuing threat they pose to humanity.

Mexico regrets the failure to reach agreement in the Programme of Action adopted by that Conference on such issues as the prohibition against civilian possession of small and light weapons and their transfer to non-State actors. Furthermore, my delegation regrets the inability to make progress in the negotiations on a protocol on verification to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. Mexico will work to ensure that the Fifth Review Conference of the Parties, which has been entrusted with the task of reviewing that Convention, takes the necessary decisions to continue those negotiations.

For Mexico, the protection of human rights is a universal value — an individual and collective obligation of States. We therefore agree with the Secretary-General about the need to bridge the gap that exists between human rights norms and their application. As a first step in the effort to bridge that gap, Mexico is determined to promote the application of international instruments in this field.

Today there are even more reasons to accord priority to the progressive development of international law and its codification. The efforts of the United Nations towards the establishment of the rule of law within and among nations represent one of the most important contributions that we can expect it to make in the new century.

The Government of Mexico has traditionally been an active participant in the efforts of the United Nations system in the area of international cooperation for development. In keeping with this tradition, Mexico will host, in Monterrey in March 2002, the International Conference on Financing for Development. It is my country's hope — this sentiment was eloquently expressed in the debate this morning by the representative of the United Kingdom — that the International Conference on Financing for Development will plot the course that must be followed if the commitments undertaken by our countries in the Millennium Declaration are to be fulfilled.

As the Secretary-General stated in his report, in this new century special importance must be attached to the strengthening of democracy in Africa and to the efforts of African States themselves to achieve lasting peace, eradicate poverty and attain sustainable development. African States themselves bear the main responsibility for seeking solutions to overcome the grave challenges they face — a responsibility that they are living up to through the adoption of economics recovery programmes and initiatives to pursue regional integration.

The New African Initiative is the most recent example of the efforts of African States to transform their continent. International support for Africa, however, remains indispensable. The international community must adopt special measures to alleviate the problem of external debt, improve access to markets, increase levels of official development assistance and augment the flow of foreign direct investment and technology transfers. The actions of the international community with regard to Africa must be governed by the principles, objectives and programmes contained in the New African Initiative. Mexico is

prepared to provide support for and cooperate with those efforts.

Given the limitations of this already lengthy statement, it will not be possible for me to refer in detail to various other important issues dealt with in the report of the Secretary-General. I would therefore like to conclude by expressing Mexico's satisfaction at the re-election of the Secretary-General for a second term, as unanimously agreed on 29 June. My country would like to congratulate Mr. Kofi Annan and take this opportunity to reaffirm its steadfast commitment to cooperate with him throughout the period of his second mandate, during which, as he has stated in paragraph 12 of his report, "we can and must do better". The journey ahead will be arduous.

Mr. Tomka (Slovakia): Before dealing with the report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization, I would like, on behalf of my country and on my own behalf, to express condemnation of the horrible terrorist crimes committed on 11 September here in New York, in Washington, D.C., and in Pennsylvania, as well as to express the support of Slovakia for our American friends and our firm commitment to joining international efforts to eradicate terrorism and its roots.

I would like to express Slovakia's great appreciation for the excellent work done by the Secretary-General. On behalf of my country, I wish Mr. Kofi Annan every success during his second term as Secretary-General of the United Nations. All of us know that the coming years will be demanding and challenging for our Organization, but they also bear promise.

The annual report carefully itemizes all areas of work where the United Nations plays an important role. The report clearly indicates the tasks and activities of our Organization. However, if we want to be successful in achieving our goals of securing peace, ensuring respect for human rights, fostering development, eradicating poverty and inequality and promoting justice and prosperity, as stipulated in the Millennium Declaration, we should strengthen our political will and bear in mind our common values.

I would like to focus on an important point made by the Secretary-General in his report, in connection with his effort to move the United Nations from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. Slovakia fully agrees that the prevention of conflict is a moral imperative in today's world. It is a humanitarian necessity if we are to save innocent lives. At the same time, it is an economic necessity, because of the extremely high price of war and post-war reconstruction. Prevention — taking action before conflict occurs — is politically necessary to ensure the credibility of international cooperation, in particular as concerns the United Nations. Some progress has been achieved in developing the capacity of the United Nations to prevent conflict, as set out by the Secretary-General last June in his report (A/55/985) to the General Assembly and the Security Council on the prevention of armed conflict. We firmly believe that the United Nations has an essential role in preventive diplomacy by virtue of its mandate, legitimacy and wide-ranging capabilities.

Stressing the United Nations role in preventive diplomacy does not mean disregarding the primary responsibility of the parties to any dispute or conflict to settle peacefully their dispute themselves. The obligation to do so, as stated in Article 2, paragraph 3, of the Charter, is a cornerstone of international law.

The key question for the international community in the face of potential conflict is not whether preventive diplomacy is an option, but how, when and by whom such diplomacy should be exercised. The main objective of this effort is to establish trust, and in this respect Slovakia strongly supports the recommendations of the Secretary-General. The ongoing discussion on the role of regional organizations, non-governmental actors and others in preventing conflicts is welcome and fully legitimate.

Civil society is an important factor in preventive diplomacy. The United Nations and others involved in preventing conflicts must have access to the viewpoints and concerns of civil society, through formal as well as informal channels. Non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and prominent individuals may have a unique ability to gain access to the roots of a conflict and to try to defuse it. Involving them might also be the right way to avoid overstraining the United Nations system.

In this context, let me mention Slovakia's active participation in the political and military activities of the international community in the search for a peaceful solution to the conflicts in different parts of the world. In recent years we have significantly increased the number of our contingents in

peacekeeping operations. At present our troops are spread throughout the world — in infantry contingents in the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) and in the United Nations Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP); in a level II hospital in the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET); and working as deminers in Ethiopia and Eritrea — all in all, 608 deployed persons.

It would nevertheless be wrong not to realize the potential of a preventive deployment of United Nations peacekeepers. A small-scale international presence could be contemplated in a number of cases in which there is a danger that a dispute or a tense situation could escalate into conflict, to the point where large-scale and costly interventions would be the only remaining option.

We believe that the prevention of conflict will be a defining and fundamental task for the international community through international cooperation, with the United Nations at the centre. The international community cannot stand by as a passive observer as situations and disputes grow into armed conflicts, either among States or within them, as has most frequently been the case in the past decade and might also be in future.

The United Nations was born out of the horror of war. The face of war has become even uglier, involving civilians on a large scale, and its most recent — and ugliest — form bears the name of terrorism. Slovakia like the rest of the civilized world, strongly condemns all forms of terrorism and violence. We will take an active part in our common endeavour to combat terrorism.

Last year we successfully resolved a problem which had burdened our Organization for years. By taking the necessary decisions on financial problems and adopting scales of assessment for both the regular and peacekeeping budgets, we have created the basic prerequisites for the better functioning of our Organization in the future. Nevertheless, we remain concerned by the financial situation of the Organization, which, to a great extent, is due to the fact that not all Member States obey the rules we have agreed on or live up to the pledges they have made.

We believe that humanity is in great need of our Organization. Through our firm political will we should act together, so that the principles and goals of our Organization can be successfully achieved.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): In the wake of the recent tragic terrorist attacks on American soil, which resulted in the loss of so many innocent lives, allow me to offer my condolences to the delegation of the United States of America. These shocking and utterly appalling terrorist acts have been strongly condemned by the Iranian people and Government, and we hope that concerted action — within the parameters of international law and under the auspices of the United Nations — will enable the international community to bring the perpetrators of these atrocious acts to justice. My delegation will participate in next week's debate on terrorism and will express in detail its views on how to combat the scourge of terrorism.

I would like to join previous speakers in commending the Secretary-General for having produced a comprehensive and thoughtful report on the work of the Organization. It clearly shows how the challenges facing the United Nations have become more complex, as have its responses. The report also clearly reflects the extensive experience and dedicated efforts of the Secretary-General in his leadership of the Organization.

Considering the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of peace and security to be an essential part of its global responsibilities, my delegation fully endorses the emphasis put in the report on the need to move this Organization from a culture of reaction to one of prevention. The steadfastness of the Secretary-General in the past few years in steering the United Nations in this direction is promising. We concur with him that practical steps should be taken with a view to putting the concept of conflict prevention into practice and matching rhetoric with action.

In this respect, we need to pay greater attention, in a more timely manner, to the root causes of tension in various regions, and these should be addressed by the humanitarian and development agencies of the United Nations system together with the Bretton Woods institutions. Such an approach should be an integral part of a preventive strategy. The dispatch of fact-finding and confidence-building missions and the development of regional mechanisms constitute, among other things, appropriate measures enabling the United Nations to act more effectively to prevent the outbreak of armed conflict. The Islamic Republic of Iran, located in a volatile region, continues to support the efforts of the Secretary-General in the area of conflict

prevention and remains prepared to assist him in his endeavours.

In the area of peacemaking, the efforts of the Secretary-General and his colleagues during the past year have also been commendable. It is regrettable that, despite his personal attention to the ongoing crisis in the occupied Palestinian territories and his two visits to the area, the continued aggressive policy of the Israelis did not allow for any lessening of the suffering of the Palestinians. The policy of wilfully killing defenceless civilians and their suffocation at the hands of the Israeli armed forces continues, as does the inaction of the Security Council, which is failing to live up to its responsibility in assigning a United Nations protection force to the area.

While the involvement of the Secretary-General in the Palestinian question is a positive development, we believe that, unless his efforts are effectively complemented by the Council and the major Powers, the realization of the basic rights of Palestinians, which is a prerequisite for the return of peace to the area, will remain elusive.

The Secretary-General, in his report, refers to the impact on some countries in Central Asia of acts perpetrated by extremist and terrorist forces, which are in part related to the situation in Afghanistan. Here, I need to stress that not only the central Asian countries, but, in fact, all of Afghanistan's neighbours have been significantly hurt by the disorder in that country. Moreover, the recent terrorist acts on American territory brought to the forefront the implications of the chaos and lawlessness in Afghanistan for the international community as a whole.

We have always reiterated that our country's interest is best served if peace and tranquillity are brought about in Afghanistan. Therefore we pledge to lend our active support to the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy aimed at restoring peace and helping Afghans form a broad-based and representative government in their country. We also welcome the continued preparedness of the United Nations to assist in the political, development and humanitarian fields in order to address the root causes of instability in the area surrounding Afghanistan.

As concerns peacekeeping operations, which continue to be one of the key instruments available to the United Nations, we believe that the capacity of this Organization effectively to plan and manage peacekeeping operations should be enhanced. Therefore, we welcome the Secretary-General's proposals, contained in document A/55/977, aimed at developing the United Nations capacity in this area, including the development of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. It is important that peacekeeping operations be provided with clearly defined mandates, objectives and command structures, as well as secure financing. We also fully endorse the view of the Secretary-General that peacekeeping must be supported and accompanied by a process of peace-building to prevent the recurrence of armed conflict and to permit recovery and development.

With respect to disarmament, I share the concerns and misgivings of the Secretary-General about the current level of international negotiations on disarmament and arms control. Despite the necessity to intensify the efforts to promote international peace and security, negotiations on strengthening the prevention and banning of the development and use of weapons of mass destruction are now faced with major obstacles. Conclusion of the verification protocol of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty preparatory work have now reached a deadlock due to the position of the United States.

Unfortunately, the same attitude has impaired progress towards concluding effective norms and guidelines to prevent the spread of a destabilizing accumulation of small arms in areas of conflict. However, the recent adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is a major step forward to achieving our objective, which needs to be pursued vigorously.

Missiles are also an important issue in the international agenda, meriting full and serious consideration. The best approach here, as the Secretary-General has indicated in his report, should be to aim at "multilaterally negotiated norms", which is also a focus of the draft resolutions adopted on the issue by the General Assembly, submitted by my country since 1999. I extend my appreciation to the Secretary-General for providing assistance for the establishment of the panel of experts to address the issue of missiles in all its aspects.

International cooperation in the field of human rights continues to play a fundamental role in the promotion and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. This is particularly important in the United Nations processes of both standard setting and implementation. If earnestly pursued, international cooperation is essentially and inherently capable of generating political will, a sense of partnership and harmony within the present multiracial and multicultural world in advancing the human core values, human rights and democracy. This is what the United Nations is all about.

The World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance recently concluded its work in Durban, South Africa. I express my warm congratulations to the people and Government of South Africa on convening the conference. It has to be acknowledged that the conference had great potential for bearing even more fruit in making a real difference in the global fight against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, but this, regrettably, was thwarted by some political circles. Nevertheless, it is our hope that all Governments will combine their efforts to effectively implement the Programme of Action adopted in Durban.

Let me turn to the International Conference on Financing for Development, a very important event for the international community as a whole and particularly for all developing countries. All of us, both developed and developing countries, are acutely aware of the historic standing and comprehensive process that we have collectively followed for convening this conference, expectations for which are very high; its impact on the major developmental issues was also acknowledged by the Millennium Declaration. The important items on the conference agenda — including trade, financial flows, external debt and systemic issues, including the reform of the international financial architecture — make the conference a historic and unique turning point for a bold, innovative and yet continuing process. As such, the Mexico conference can set the stage for basic major parameters towards forging a new consensus in which the international community strives to define collective objectives and goals for financing for development and takes the necessary measures to achieve them. The main approach in the conference should be focused on finding innovative measures to address the major challenges of globalization in the field of financing for development, while bearing in mind its complexities and benefits. In this process, the international community should strive to engage in constructive dialogue and negotiations leading to a fruitful outcome and achievement for all.

Convening the special Session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS was a timely response by the United Nations to this tragic epidemic, which is destroying the social fabric in the most affected countries, reversing their development achievements. The severity of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, the most formidable development challenge of our time, particularly in Africa, calls for coordinated international resolve and determination to address the roots of the crisis and to undertake the practical ways and means to deal with it effectively. The situation in Asia is also seriously threatening, emphasizing the necessity of preventive measures.

Apart from all urgent relief efforts and short-term remedies, the ultimate solution can be found in eradicating poverty through the realization of genuine, long-term development. To this end, securing a global commitment to enhance resources and the intensification of national, regional and international efforts to combat it in a comprehensive manner is urgently required. The establishment of a global fund, proposed by the Secretary-General, could be a step forward in this regard if adequate resources, commensurate with the magnitude of the problem, were mobilized and managed free from political considerations and conditionalities, taking into account the concerns of all nations. Moreover, needless to say, the imperative of moral and religious values, the centrality of the family as the basic unit of society, and responsible individual conduct are also indispensable for a successful fight against the epidemic and are equally essential.

The Islamic Republic of Iran attaches great importance to the World Summit on Sustainable Development and its preparatory process. This summit will provide a unique opportunity for the international community to undertake a comprehensive assessment of the achievements, constraints and shortcomings in the implementation of Agenda 21. We firmly believe that the summit should aim at the removal of the obstacles impeding the implementation of the Rio commitments, and provide, in particular, the developing world with adequate financial and

technological support. In our view, the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities should continue to be the guiding principle for the deliberations of the World Summit on Sustainable Development.

With regard to paragraphs 175 and 176 of the Secretary-General's report, I would like to indicate that Iran has actively participated in the discussions on international environmental governance and will continue to provide its contribution to that process. Strengthening international environmental governance must be viewed through the lens of sustainable development. That would ensure the integration of the three interdependent pillars of environmental protection, economic growth and social development in a balanced manner. In that regard, the Commission on Sustainable Development, which is the main forum for high-level policy debate on sustainable development, should also be strengthened.

With regard to the United Nations Forum on Forests, Iran has actively participated in discussions on forests and will continue to do so. We sincerely hope that this new body will achieve its objectives in enhancing sustainable forest management through the implementation of proposals for action of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and the International Forum on Forests. In that context, we emphasize the importance of giving attention to the concerns and interests of low-forest-cover countries.

The President in the Chair.

Programme of work

The President: I should like to outline our programme of work for the next two weeks.

As members were already informed, the General Assembly will hold a debate on agenda item 166, "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", starting Monday, 1 October, in the morning.

On Thursday, 4 October, in the morning, the General Assembly will start its consideration of agenda item 11, "Report of the Security Council". The report of the Security Council will be issued tomorrow, Wednesday, 26 September, as document A/56/2. The list of speakers for item 11 is now open.

On Monday, 8 October, in the morning, we will hold the election of five non-permanent members of the Security Council.

On Friday, 12 October, in the morning, the General Assembly and the Security Council will hold concurrent meetings to elect a member of the International Court of Justice.

I will soon inform the Assembly of the scheduling of other plenary items.

The meeting rose at 1.15 p.m.